EXCISE

E 1 pp. 1-2

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY F Schmelzer DATE 4/9/87

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JUNE 29 1981

Dear Mr. Brodhead:

I have been asked to respond to your letter of May 27 to the President concerning the sale of AWACS to Saudi Arabia. I appreciate that both you and some of your constituents have strong reservations about the proposed sale. I would like to take this opportunity to put forward the reasons why the Administration believes it is in the U.S. national interest to proceed with this sale.

The proposal emphasizes this Administration's determination to counter the erosion in Middle East/Persian Gulf security, bolster our friends, protect vital Western interests, and block Soviet exploitation of regional tensions and vulnerabilities. We believe it is important to build the confidence of our friends by helping them with reasonable and adequate means of defense.

Our sales to Saudi Arabia are proposed in the context of a longstanding security relationship in defense of mutual vital interests. We are not granting a unilateral favor. Strengthening security in the region and continuing the search for peace between Israel and the Arab countries are mutually reinforcing elements in our policy. These states are more likely to move toward peace if they feel secure and confident. A more secure Saudi Arabia will help the Saudis promote stability in the region and expand their already great cooperation with us.

The AWACS aircraft we propose to sell will significantly improve the Saudis ability to defend their immensely important oil facilities in the northeast by enabling them to meet an air attack more effectively -- a purpose also in the U.S. interest. AWACS aircraft would provide the only effective warning of a low altitude air attack on petroleum facilities along their Persian Gulf coast. The AWACS is a defensive system. Essentially

The Honorable
William M. Brodhead,
House of Representatives.

a flying radar station, an AWACS aircraft carries no weapons. It could not be used effectively with the combat aircraft of other countries without extensive joint planning, training, and secure communications equipment which the other Arab countries do not possess. An AWACS cannot detect ground targets, and does not possess radio monitoring, photo reconnaissance, or other intelligence gathering capabilities. I would point out that we deployed four U.S. AWACS aircraft to Saudi Arabia to meet the potential threat of the Iraq/Iran war, and that the dangers to the region also threaten Israel's security.

The United States is taking a number of steps to help ensure that AWACS and other technologies sold to the Saudis will not be compromised. In addition, U.S. military versions of cryptographic equipment and certain other sensitive systems will not be included in the Saudi AWACS aircraft. We are also working out a security of information agreement to protect the sensitive equipment we are proposing to sell to Saudi Arabia, which will include provisions for joint periodic security inspections of Saudi facilities.

We recognize that our proposed sale is of great concern to Israel. However, a central feature of U.S. policy is to ensure the security of Israel. Israel already has a highly effective air defense system, manned by well-trained personnel, including sophisticated aircraft such as the F-15 and F-16, as well as defensive missile and gun systems. Any attack by Saudi Arabia on Israel would be prohibitively costly.

We are planning to seek Congressional approval to provide Israel with additional military sales credits of $300 million in each of fiscal years 1983 and 1984. These credits will enable the Israelis to purchase additional air defense aircraft or other equipment they have deferred because of their difficult financial position. These funds will be added to an already substantial military and economic assistance program for Israel and should total over $2.8 billion in fiscal year 1982. We believe that Israel will be able to maintain its qualitative edge and will remain capable of defeating any combination of Arab forces. We will also work closely with Israel to counter the Soviet threat.

Finally, let me assure you that we would view the use of any U.S.-supplied equipment of any sort by Saudi Arabia against Israel as a matter of utmost gravity. The Government of Saudi Arabia has assured us it will use U.S.-supplied equipment only for defensive purposes. Saudi operation of its F-15s and AWACS aircraft will depend on continuing U.S. maintenance and logistical support. The United States routinely places transfer and use restrictions on arms we sell to foreign states -- others do not.

We do not believe it would be in U.S. or Israeli interests for anyone else to replace the United States as Saudi Arabia's major arms supplier.

We hope you will share our judgment of the importance of these proposals for the overall U.S. security posture in the Middle East and Persian Gulf region. We believe that U.S. efforts to respond to legitimate Saudi defense requirements while maintaining Israel's qualitative military edge hold the best promise for creating the conditions to achieve our objectives of peace in the region and the protection of our friends, including Israel.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Fairbanks
Assistant Secretary
for Congressional Relations

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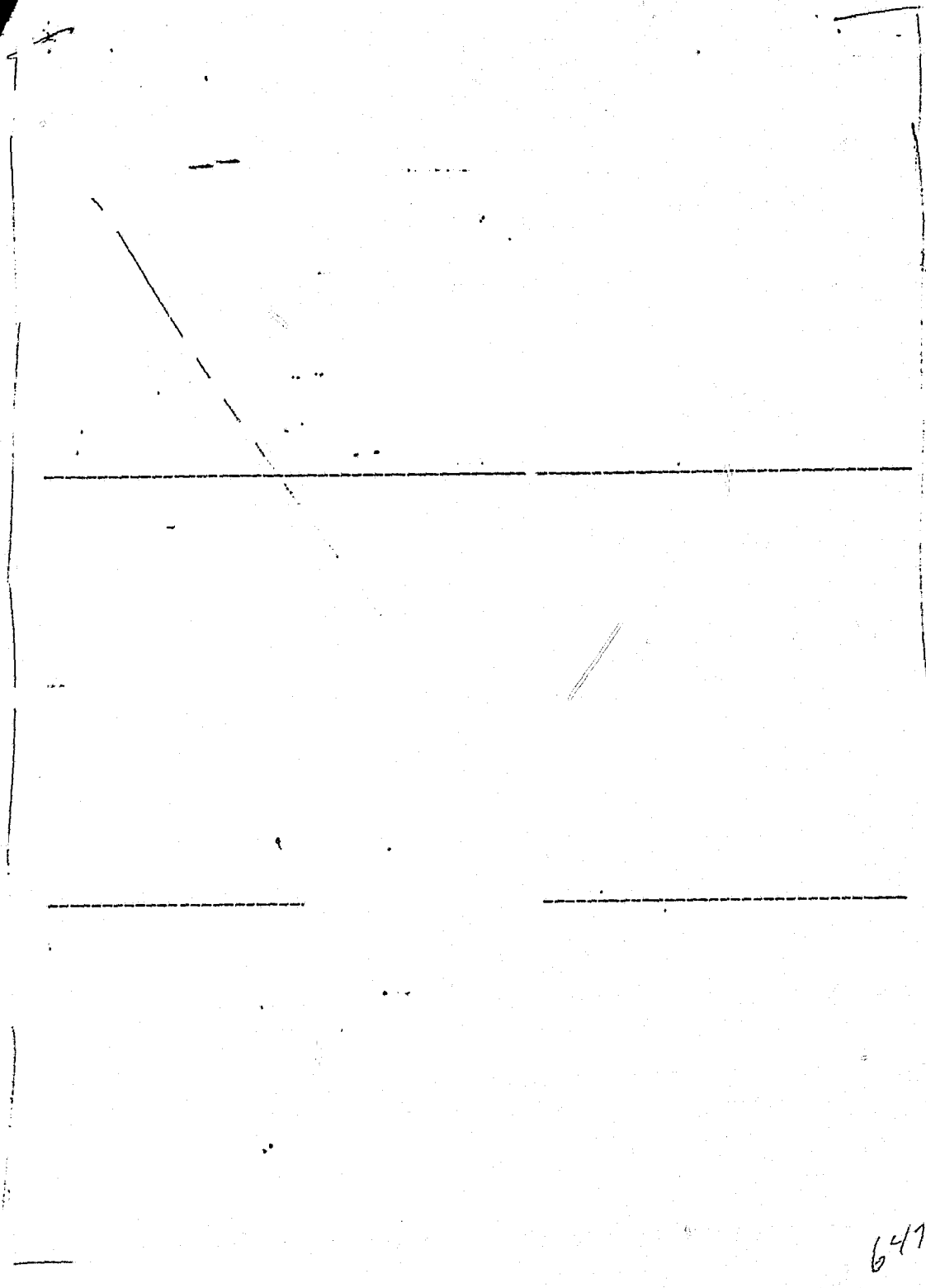

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June 4, 1981

Dear Mr. Brodhead:

This is to acknowledge your May 27 letter to the President in which you conveyed your sentiments, and those of your constituents, in opposition to the sale of AWACS to Saudi Arabia.

You may be assured that I have brought your assessment of this matter to the attention of the President's foreign policy advisers. Please know that your interest in writing is appreciated.

With cordial regard, I am

Sincerely,

Max L. Friedersdorf
Assistant to the President

The Honorable William M. Brodhead
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

MLF:CMP:KIR:kir

cc: w/copy of inc to NSC Secretariat - for DIRECT response with copy to Max Friedersdorf

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8117973

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May 27, 1981

n.f.

President Ronald Reagan
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

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Dear Mr. President:

Enclosed is just a partial listing of the names of my constituents who have expressed their deep opposition to the sale of AWACS to Saudi Arabia. I have not yet received one letter in support of this action.

I am convinced, as my constituents are convinced, that this sale will undermine the security of Israel, our longtime ally and the only democracy in the Middle East. In addition, selling AWACS to Saudi Arabia makes it possible that they will fall into the hands of people hostile to U.S. interests. I believe that we can protect our vital interests in the Mideast region without running these risks. I urge that this move be reconsidered before a formal request is submitted to the Congress.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely yours,

W. M. Brodhead

William M. Brodhead
Representative in Congress

WMB:elb

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